

# NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



## Museum Chronicles



### FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

*Year of...The Art of Niagara*

#### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SEPT 13	Niagara Foundation House Tour
SEPT 18	Art of Niagara Lecture Series – <i>Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake</i> by Fred Hall, 7:30pm
OCT 9	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7:30 pm
OCT 13	Thanksgiving Day – Museum Closed
OCT 15	New Architecture Exhibition Opens – <i>Domestic Gems</i>
OCT 18/19	Doors Open Niagara
DEC 5/6	Rotary Holiday House Tour – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, PLEASE CONTACT AMY
DEC 6	*SAVE THE DATE FOR A SPECIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM*
DEC 11	Annual Carol Sing and Hamper Raffle Draw, 7:00 pm

#### NOTABLE VOLUNTEERS



Once again our volunteers were represented at the Ontario Voluntary Service Awards at a ceremony in Niagara Falls. This year's recipients were: Dr. Richard Merritt (20 years), Terry Mactaggart (10 years), Ed Tierney (10 years), Lesley Fowler (5 years), Suzanne Hebert (5 years), and Deborah Paine (5 years). Congratulations to all our volunteers!!

Pictured left to right are Lesley Fowler, Suzanne Hebert, Ed Tierney and Deborah Paine.

#### NIAGARA FOUNDATION HOUSE TOUR

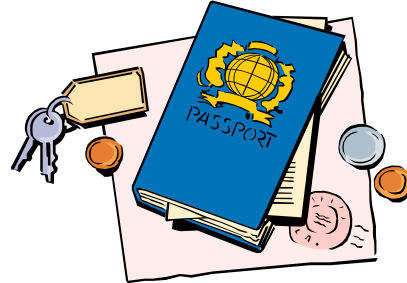
The annual Niagara Foundation House Tour is taking place on September 13 from 10am – 5pm. We apologize for the incorrect date posted in your summer newsletter. The house tour will showcase six unique homes of architectural and historical significance, plus the rarely seen ceremonial Chambers of the Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The houses include: The Slave Cottage, The Barn, The Barn Quarters, and Magnolias, all in Old Town and The Belfry & Dyck residence and The Pentesco House, both in Virgil. Tickets can be purchased through the Chamber of Commerce for \$20. Call 905-468-1950 or visit [www.niagaraonthelake.com](http://www.niagaraonthelake.com).



## MUSEUM PASSPORT

The Museums of Niagara Association (MONA) has decided to continue its agreement this year and offer free admission to participating Niagara museums. This year, members can pick up a “passport” at the Museum and take it to each of the following locations for complimentary admission:

- Niagara Historical Society Museum
- Grimsby Museum
- Jordan Historical Museum
- RiverBrink Art Museum
- Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum
- St. Catharines Museum
- Willoughby Museum
- Lundy’s Lane Museum
- Battle Ground Hotel Museum



At each site you will receive a stamp on your passport. Once your passport is full, you can hand it in at the Museum and you will be entered to win a prize. Please take advantage of this great offer and see some of your local museums today!

## HISTORY SCHOLARSHIP



Two of our members, David C. Murray (board member) and Elizabeth Surtees of Niagara-on-the-Lake, have made a significant donation to

Brock University to establish a graduate award for students studying the history of Niagara.

The award will be entitled the David C. Murray and Elizabeth Surtees Niagara Historical Society Post-Graduate Scholarship in the History of Niagara.

Murray and Surtees donated \$56,000 to establish the award, and the Ontario government's Ontario Graduate Fellowship Program (OGFP) will match their funds with \$56,000, bringing the total value of the graduate student award to \$112,000.

The students who receive this award should be in a graduate history program at Brock University and carrying out their Major Research Paper on a Niagara local history subject, focusing on such topics as the political, economic, social, industrial, agricultural, maritime, or related history of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake or former township of Niagara.

Upon completion, the student's research paper will be submitted to the Niagara Historical Society who will then be able to publish it on its own or as part of an anthology. This project is very important to the Society as it guarantees that we will have academic research to publish each year. We thank David Murray and Elizabeth Surtees for their generous contribution to the publishing legacy of the Society.

**THERE ARE STILL SEVERAL MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT PAID THEIR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2008. PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE ENCLOSED FORM.**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM will be held on Friday **October 9, 2008 at 7:30 pm**. If you would like to see a version of the minutes from last year's AGM, please visit our website at [www.niagarahistorical.museum/agm.html](http://www.niagarahistorical.museum/agm.html). You can also request a paper copy by calling the Museum.

We are accepting nominations for new Board members. If you would like to nominate someone for the Society Board, please fill out the form below and send it to the Museum as soon as possible.

### **NOMINATION FORM FOR SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to stand for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual General meeting, October 9, 2008. If elected to the position for which I am nominated, I agree to serve for the term elected.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## DIGITIZATION WORKSHOP

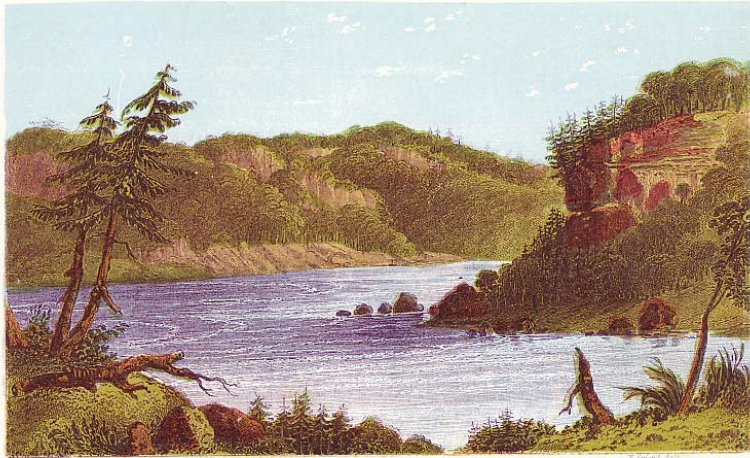
In July, members of the Ontario Museum Association hosted a small digital workshop attended by representatives from our Museum, from Grimsby Museum and from RiverBrink. The workshop was intended to educate small museums on how to digitize their collections and showcase them on Artefacts Canada. We were able to take 30 photos and are close to getting them online at [www.chin.gc.ca/English/Artefacts\\_Canada/index.html](http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Artefacts_Canada/index.html) for the public to view.

## THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

The Society appreciates all the support we get from members and donors. As always, to keep the Society as a resource and a protector of this community's heritage, money is required. Conservation supplies, insurance, program costs, volunteer development, audits and utilities all cost money. The last one is obviously important. We need to ensure that the environmental standards needed to preserve the collection are maintained. Humidity and

temperature fluctuations are disastrous to artefacts. With this in mind, the Museum is embarking on the upgrading of our old furnaces and humidifiers. We have prioritized the purchase of high efficiency equipment in our ongoing plans here at the Museum. Your donations to the museum allow us to ensure the long term care of our fantastic collection of material related to the history of Niagara.

## THE YEAR OF “THE ART OF NIAGARA”



WHIRLPOOL NEAR NIAGARA.  
The Whirlpool from *The Falls of Niagara and Vicinity*

No one who lives in Niagara can debate that tourism is a major driver for the economy. Historically, Niagara Falls has attracted visitors for centuries but it was in the Victorian era that it started to attract the masses. This spilled over to our town downstream from the great wonder.

The dawn of mass transportation with trains and steamships provided access to artists and visitors. It also created a market

for the art of Niagara. Artists created works for mass audiences who also wanted to witness the splendor of the Falls first hand. Travel journals and diaries from the Victorian era provide visitors with a sense of Niagara and created the marketing allure of the Falls that continues today. These depictions of Niagara Falls started appearing on glassware, wallpaper, books and in illustrated newspapers.

Such paintings had an impact on how others saw the community and how the community saw itself. Visitors to Niagara expected to see the Falls and take in the different sites of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Museum collection contains several books that were marketed to travelers to Niagara to remember their trip, as well as including many helpful suggestions as to how one should enjoy their stay in Niagara. The booklet in the museum collection, titled *The Falls of Niagara and Vicinity*, is a reprint of an earlier version. The first versions were oil views. The Museum edition contains many chromolithographs of the Niagara region.

Two other books in the collection are very simple in style, but have much more information. Within the *Orr's Pictorial Guide* (1842) and *Peck's Tourist's Companion* (1845) are many engravings of sights along the Niagara River, as well as accommodations and people who made Niagara such a tourist draw. These travel guides provide us with great views of Niagara, as well as important information about what people did in Niagara while visiting.

*Hunter's Panoramic Guide from Niagara to Quebec* from 1857 discusses the scenery of Queenston: "Near this point the river becomes more tranquil, the shores appear less broken and wild, and the change in the scenery affords a pleasing transition from the sublime to the beautiful." It would be hard to argue against that today and, as we know the beauty of Queenston, it is not surprising that artists flocked to reflect and interpret that beauty.

**Please note: There are now exhibition catalogues for *Inspired Landscapes* available in the Museum gift shop for \$15.**

## FROM OUR SUMMER STUDENTS



My name is Lindsay Ulrich and this year I was lucky enough to get a summer position at the Niagara Historical Museum. I am a recent graduate of the University of Toronto where I studied Visual Studies and Anthropology and am continuing my education in Cultural Resource Management. My summer position at the museum introduced me to what goes on behind the scenes in museums and allowed me to better understand how museums are run. My tasks here involve preparation for the 1812 Bicentennial coming up in 2012. I've helped photograph 1812 artifacts, scan archives, and developed a walking tour that highlights the numerous 1812 historic sites in Niagara on the Lake. Getting to handle cultural artifacts like uniforms, or 1812 weaponry was especially interesting. By working front desk duties I have also had the opportunity to meet travelers, history buffs, and community members. It's been an exciting summer and an excellent learning experience for me.



My name is Miriam Cunningham and I am a third year Sociology student at Wilfrid Laurier University. I have always had an interest in local history and I have previously worked at Fort George and Ball's Falls historical sites. I was pleased to get this summer placement as I felt it would help me to cultivate my knowledge of Niagara's past. This summer I have created four small displays for the upstairs gallery of Memorial Hall as well as two small guidebooks, also for Memorial Hall, one about golf in Niagara and the other about local theatre. I have also helped to add reference materials to our database in an effort to make research easier. In the future I hope to continue working with local historical sites to help preserve Niagara's heritage.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The thought of summer coming near its end is a sobering thought. It has left me wondering, will the rest of the year also pass quickly? If this is the case the preparation for our upcoming Annual General Meeting has us looking to what we accomplished in 2008 and, more importantly, where we are headed in the future.

One of our biggest challenges will be that of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the War of 1812 in 2012. This may appear to be a long way off, but we must decide now what direction our museum will take and, financially, what we can do to make the most of this auspicious occasion.

In the three years leading up to the big event, we will want to showcase themes that will build enthusiasm and get not only our members, but the whole community excited and involved.

I would like to hear what ideas you might have as to how you would like to see the Museum involved. Remember, we are not Niagara Falls, nor are we Fort George. We will have to find our own unique way to show our involvement in this historic period. Put on your thinking caps and give us your input!

**Neil Rumble**

## REMINISCENCES

### Photo Day at Parliament Oak School



Photo day was an exciting event at Parliament Oak. The school had replaced the old public school and opened in the late 1940s. Even in 1955 it seemed very modern with eight classrooms on the main floor and two in the basement. There was no rotation and one sat in the same classroom all day, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:30 to 4:00 pm, with only a 15 minute recess in the morning and afternoon.

One regular teacher, Mr. Holmes was absent that day and the supply teacher, Mrs. Lauder supervised us. It was great to escape from the classroom as you can tell by the majority of the faces, especially that of Don Smith,

centre of the back row.

Not all the children can be identified but to Mrs. Lauder's left is Don Beckett, Terry Boulton, Gerald Burke, Don Smith, Harry Sittler, two unidentified, Doug Summers and Casper Van Ryan. The third row has David Ansley, two unidentified, Brian Harrison, unidentified, and John McDermid. The second row has Robert O'Connell (second from the left) and Anita Dick (fifth from the left). The front row has Pat Grindley, unidentified, Jim Ryan, Judy Ryan, unidentified, Austin Richardson and Beverley Kyle.

**Photograph and Article Submitted by Brian Harrison**

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Many of our members come to see our exhibits but have no idea what treasures are behind the reception desk. Our Managing Director, Clark Bernat, invites you to come for a behind the scenes tour of your collection. Please call ahead to book your tour and bring a few friends to see our archives, our storage areas and find out what happens when an artefact is donated and what it takes to keep it preserved for many years. Call 905-468-3912 to book today!

## DOMESTIC GEMS

“The Silo”



Our new exhibition, Domestic Gems will be opening October 15<sup>th</sup>. This display of design drawings, blueprints and photographs is a travelling exhibition which celebrates the architecture of A.E. Nicholson & R.I. Macbeth.

The Niagara Society of Architects chose to highlight Nicholson and Macbeth's residential work, because so many of their admired homes grace communities throughout the Niagara Peninsula. These homes, more than their still notable public buildings, illustrate their mastery of styles, which included their Arts and Crafts and Neo-Tudor, to their less well-known Spanish Eclectic, Colonial, Classical and Modern. The houses were typically well built, richly detailed, delightful in composition, and skilfully sited. Still eminently liveable today, the houses are also a testament to the craftsmen that built them, and to the owners that have sensitively upgraded them to meet contemporary needs.

Although the exhibition focuses primarily on Nicholson and Macbeth's residential buildings, they also built public buildings, schools, churches and a variety of institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. Major buildings included the YMCA (now demolished), the Land Registry Building, the Odd Fellows Hall, the Merriton Public Library, the St.Catharines General Hospital, Lookout Point Gold Club, the Orchard Inn, Old Glenridge School, and the St.Catharines City Hall. In the exhibition, a sampling of such non-residential buildings is illustrated with black and white photographs and original drawings.



## DOORS OPEN NIAGARA

Doors Open weekend 2008 is October 18th and 19th and once again, the Museum is one of the participating sites which are free to the public. Please stay tuned for details on other

participating sites which will be available closer to Doors Open weekend.

**"The Art of Architecture"** is the theme of this year's Doors Open Niagara, with a special emphasis on discovering art in and around historically and architecturally significant sites.

Participating sites include elegant residences and inns, churches containing magnificent stained glass windows, Industrial Age factories, municipal buildings, museums, schoolhouses, and sites that played a role in the Underground Railroad.

If you would like to volunteer at the Museum during Doors Open, please contact Amy at the Museum. We always need extra help that weekend to greet visitors and answer questions in the galleries.

**Board of Directors**

Neil Rumble, President  
Jim Armstrong, VP Museum  
Deborah Paine-Corbiere, VP Society  
Daryl Novak, Treasurer  
Amalie Enns, Secretary  
David Murray  
Harry Murdoch  
Brett Sherlock  
Charles Jackson  
Dennis Kam

**Honorary  
Life Members**

Joy Ormsby  
Richard Taylor

**Museum Staff**

Clark Bernat - Managing Director  
Amy Klassen – Society Administrator

**Niagara Historical Society &  
Museum Hours**

The Museum is open daily, except for New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

May-October: 10 am to 5 pm  
November-April: 1 pm to 5pm

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